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Letter dated 25 December 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Iraq to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a letter dated 25 December 2000 from Mr. Mohammed Said Al-Sahaf, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Iraq, concerning the failure of the United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission (UNIKOM) to carry out fundamental elements of its mandate or to observe the hostile actions mounted against Iraq on a daily basis by United States and British military aircraft in the demilitarized zone between Iraq and Kuwait. This failure reflects the extent of the corruption and decline that are affecting the United Nations as a result of United States coercion.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Saeed H. **Hasan**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 25 December 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Iraq to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I should like, first of all, to refer to my letter dated 26 March 2000 that recalled the mandate entrusted to the United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission (UNIKOM) pursuant to Security Council resolutions 687 (1991), paragraph 5, and 689 (1991). Among the duties included under this mandate were the obligation of the Mission to monitor the demilitarized zone between Iraq and Kuwait, observe any hostile or potentially hostile action mounted from the territory of one State against the other, to deter violations of the boundary and to keep the peace. The Security Council requested the Secretary-General to report to it regularly on the operations of the unit and to do so immediately if there are serious violations of the zone or potential threats to peace.

On this occasion I wish to draw your attention once more to the fact that United States and British military aircraft continue to violate Iraqi airspace on a daily basis and to carry out acts of military aggression against Iraq, taking off from their bases in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait and from aircraft carriers belonging to their two States in the Arabian Gulf. A not inconsiderable number of those hostile military aircraft overfly the demilitarized zone in the course of the flights into Iraq which they make on a daily basis for the purpose of perpetrating acts of aggression against that country. They overfly the zone again when returning after carrying out those acts to their bases in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. This constitutes a blatant violation of the relevant Security Council resolutions. The Mission is responsible for closely observing such violations and, in view of their seriousness, submitting immediate reports thereupon. At the very least, it should ensure that the information is conveyed in the periodic reports it submits to you and thence to the Security Council, thereby documenting and establishing the nationality of the perpetrator of those violations and bringing the attention of the members of the Security Council to the violations and acts of military aggression perpetrated by the United States and the United Kingdom, in order that they may take the appropriate measures to prevent any repetition of such acts.

However, close examination of the reports submitted by UNIKOM make it clear that their contents do not comply with the specifications of its mandate, namely, to observe any hostile action and determine the identity and nationality of the aircraft that overfly the demilitarized zone with a view to mounting hostile actions against Iraq, a founder member of the United Nations, violating its sovereignty and airspace, threatening its security and putting at risk the safety of its citizens.

The pretext persistently put forward by the United Nations Observer Mission in the demilitarized zone in order to justify its inability to establish the nationality of the aircraft that violate the aforementioned zone is that those aircraft fly at extremely high altitudes, making it impossible to identify them or include that information in the Mission's periodic reports. Such excuses cannot be sustained in view of the specialized technology that is available to UNIKOM in order to establish with precision the identity, nationality and technical specifications of these military aircraft. Furthermore, the United States and British aggressors themselves declare, with the greatest imperialist arrogance, that their military aircraft violate Iraqi sovereignty on a daily basis, carry out acts of aggression against Iraq, and threaten

its regional security and safety, coming from Saudi and Kuwaiti airspace and passing through the airspace of the demilitarized zone.

The fact that UNIKOM has failed to carry out major and fundamental elements of the mandate with which it was entrusted pursuant to Security Council resolutions 687 (1991) and 689 (1991) raises legitimate questions with regard to the credibility and objectivity of the Mission's reports and its ability to report the gravity of these actions, which put security and peace in the region in serious jeopardy.

I should like to set forth officially the following facts, observations and queries:

1. The facts established in this letter are extremely disturbing and demonstrate the extent of the corruption and decline that are affecting the United Nations as a result of United States pressure, coercion and intimidation.

2. The United Nations Observer Mission is not observing the violations of the demilitarized zone perpetrated by United States and British military aircraft. In its reports, UNIKOM merely states that unidentified military aircraft overflew the demilitarized zone, and that those aircraft were flying at very high altitudes.

We should like to ask whether flights carried out in the airspace over the demilitarized zone by military aircraft flying at high altitudes do not constitute a violation of that zone? We should like to know your response to that question, since if flights at very high altitude are not considered a violation, we Iraqis also have the right to undertake such flights. What would the position of UNIKOM and the Security Council be if Iraqi military aircraft were to carry out high altitude flights over the demilitarized zone? Would they consider such flights as a violation?

3. Both you and the Security Council have remained silent with regard to the persistence of United States and British military aircraft in trespassing on the demilitarized zone on a daily basis when they pass through it in order to violate Iraqi airspace and perpetrate acts of aggression against Iraq and its people, threatening its security and stability. The fact that neither you nor the Security Council have established a clearly defined position on this serious issue can only be interpreted to mean that you consider that violations of the airspace over the demilitarized zone by United States and British military aircraft do not constitute a violation of Security Council resolutions or of the goals behind the establishment of that zone.

4. The United States persists in causing severe difficulties to and conspiring against the Republic of Iraq. United States and British military aircraft carry out daily bombardments in the north and south of Iraq, regardless of the fact that those military acts are carried out on the basis of a unilateral decision taken by those two States. That decision has no basis in law or the relevant Security Council resolutions. As Secretary-General of the United Nations this is a fact of which you are well aware, as are China, the Russian Federation and France, the three other permanent members of the Security Council, and the 10 non-permanent members of the Council.

It is surely a strange situation when, for more than eight years, United States and British acts of military aggression have been perpetrated on a daily basis in the north and south of Iraq, and the demilitarized zone between Iraq and Kuwait is also blatantly violated on a daily basis by United States and British military aircraft: in

the period from 28 August 1992 to 10 December 2000, there were 154,518 such violations, but you have remained silent and taken no stand against those acts of aggression. Neither has any mention been made of such violations of Security Council resolutions in your regular periodic or ad hoc reports.

5. We must also query whether the Security Council's silence and the low profile it maintains with regard to United States and British aggression against Iraq and violation of the demilitarized zone does not demonstrate the level to which the Security Council has sunk, when 13 of its 15 members see that two of its members are violating its resolutions, and take no action. How, then, can they demand that anyone else shows respect for Security Council resolutions?

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Mohammed Said **Al-Sahaf**
Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Iraq